

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 6884

From:
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To the Distinguished Members of the CGA Education Committee

I heartily endorse HB 6884: AAC the Recruitment, Retention and Enhancement of the Teaching Profession because it is needed desperately. When the CEA reports fully 74 percent of teachers are thinking of leaving the profession, it is madness not to support these educators however is reasonable, affordable and ethical.

The great public intellectual Mark Van Doren said, “The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery.” Had he not thought this way, we would not have had the seminal works of artists and thinkers from Trappist monk Thomas Merton to Beat writer Jack Kerouac, who, along with countless other notables, were taught by Van Doren.

But today, even in Connecticut, any teacher who attempts to “assist discovery” is vulnerable to threats from zealots who attack first and ask questions later, or, more typically, never even bother to ask. In our fractious, increasingly uncivil world, where so-called “pink slime” journalism gins up fear and stokes conspiracy theories about everything from vaccines to slavery, we all need to stand firmly with trained professionals who, like Van Doren, assist with discovery. This can be the discovery of self — as so many young people need — or an honest, unvarnished look into our nation’s history, which we all need.

It is our teachers who guide us through this process. It is teachers who are sometimes the only trusted adult at a time when a child is most vulnerable. I know, because I was one once.

Please — no more red hearts saying “thank you” and hung from tree limbs during Covid but now left to sway, tattered, in the wind. Instead, let’s show our gratitude to teachers in ways that really matter — starting with protecting their very wellbeing.

Thank you for this bill.